Expeditionary Logistics Center at Sierra Army Depot — The Army's One-Stop Shop for Joint Logistics

Megan Barr

The Base Realignment and Closure Committee has recommended that Sierra Army Depot (SIAD) transform into a "multifunctional installation that serves as a Joint Expeditionary Logistics Center." This recommendation has prompted SIAD to begin its evolution into what will be known as the Joint Expeditionary Logistics Center at Sierra (JELCS). The current depot, strategically located in Herlong, CA, approximately 50 miles north of Reno, NV, is supporting the implementation of its new force structure by establishing best practices that strengthen its ability to adhere to the new DOD requirements. SIAD's prime location and supportive infrastructure also make it an excellent setting for field training exercises (FTX). SIAD will continue to provide maintenance, assembly and containerization while expanding the size of its open and covered storage facilities.

U.S. Army Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, prepare to convoy off base to conduct a mission at Forward Operating Base Remagen, Iraq, April 16, 2006. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Teddy Wade, 55th Signal Co. (Combat Camera).)

Infrastructure

Sierra's infrastructure is ideal for performing multifunctional operations while providing expeditionary logistics support and rapid deployment to support and sustain our warfighters. Sierra performs five operations that are vital to the future of Joint expeditionary logistics: long-term storage, transportation management, reset, retail supply and Joint training. All of the operations encompass Life-Cycle Logistics Management and are essential to warfighter readiness and deployment.

Joint Training

From May 15 to 24, 2006, Sierra played the role of "host nation" (HN) for an FTX for the U.S. Air Force (USAF) named Lightning Fury. Lightning Fury was a 10-day exercise performed at the Amedee Army Airfield (AAF), Herlong, CA, designed to deploy the 570th Contingency Response Group (CRG) to open an airbase in an environment similar to Afghanistan. The exercise included personnel drops, aircraft touch-and-go landings, cargo drops, cargo loading and unloading, flying with the aid of night vision goggles and threat reaction training. "The 570th CRG has been in existence for a little over a year and this is really the first opportunity to go out and practice and train as a full CRG," remarked USAF COL Timothy Grosz, Commander, 615th Contingency Response Wing (CRW).

The 570th CRG resides at Travis Air Force Base (AFB), CA. The 570th, along with the 571st and 572nd CRGs, make up the 615th CRW. The 570th CRG has 113 people from the Global Mobility Squadron and the Global Mobility Readiness Squadron with specialties ranging from security forces to aerial port operations. "Because of the various job specialties, we have to practice," explained Grosz.

"The CRG is confirming and fine-tuning their operations for deployment and they are writing their doctrine as they go. The CRG is still in its developmental stage and the lessons learned during this exercise will help to write the Air Force instruction," Grosz continued.

The CRG is designed to have a response time anywhere in the world within 12 hours. They are the first ones to act during times of war and/or when humanitarian or disaster relief efforts are needed. The CRG's "open the airbase" activities include predeployment, seizure of a bare base, construction of a tent city and coordination between the CRG and the HN. These activities establish the essential functions of an airbase, allowing the base to be transitioned over to follow-on forces.

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At the beginning of Lightning Fury, an 8-man team flew in on a C-17 aircraft to survey AAF. This survey team determined that AAF was suitable to use. "The Amedee Airfield is a useful training venue because the weather replicates Afghanistan's," said BG Brooks Bash, Commander, 15th Expeditionary Mobility Task Force.

"Sierra Army Depot was chosen because of the desert conditions, mountains and runway conditions," explained CMSG Sidney Brown, Superintendent, 570th CRG. "Once AAF was deemed worthy, the CRG seized the airfield and constructed a tent city. This was the first time that the CRG was able to assemble their shower tent and use it. The exercise demonstrated how much hard work has to be put into building a provisional city."

Throughout Lightning Fury, the CRG performed many threat reaction simulations. Some simulations consisted of force-on-force exercises that used

Figure 1. Ongoing operations for JELCS

A C-130 lands at AAF, SIAD, after performing cargo airdrops during Exercise Lightning Fury. By year end, construction will begin on AAF's runway to expand its length to 10,000 feet to accommodate the larger C-5 aircraft. (U.S. Army photo by Vision Information Specialist Lynn Goddard.)

Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement Systems (MILES). MILES uses laser bullets that are detected when they hit laser transmitters. The laser transmitters are attached to individuals and weapon systems and assess the lethality of a "hit." Training with MILES increases the CRG's combat readiness. "The training we are doing here is highly important to the U.S. Air Force," stated Bash.

For the duration of Lightning Fury, Sierra played the role of a realistic HN by providing fuel, water, food, disposal and outer security. "We have had outstanding support from Sierra Army Depot, which is playing our host nation. Amedee Airfield is a perfect environment," Grosz remarked. "Lightning Fury was successful as a result of the strong support that was established between the 570th CRG and Sierra."

During next year's exercise, Sierra will move expeditionary supplies from its warehouses to awaiting aircraft to further integrate SIAD's workforce with the Joint Expeditionary Logistics (JEL) concept.

Reset

Reset is the reconditioning of equipment that has been returned from war and peacetime operations. The reset process starts with the receiving of equipment that is being returned from operational units. Once the equipment has been received, all of the material that is contained inside and out is unloaded. An inventory is taken of all material to assess what is needed. The equipment is then repaired, painted and assembled back into working condition ready to ship. The reset process is also continuously improving and becoming more efficient with the help of Lean Six Sigma (LSS), allowing the equipment to be rapidly reintegrated back into operational units for our Soldiers.

Transportation Management

Sierra's transportation infrastructure supports the JELC structure. Sierra has access to a major highway system and possesses 114 miles of paved roadways, 59 miles of rail and 3 rail classification yards, and a 7,168 foot-airfield runway that is C-5 capable. Late in 2006, Sierra will break ground at AAF, extending the length to 10,000 feet and adding an Instrument Landing System that will provide all-weather capabilities. These additions will enhance the abilities to load and unload materials, field train and deploy rapidly.

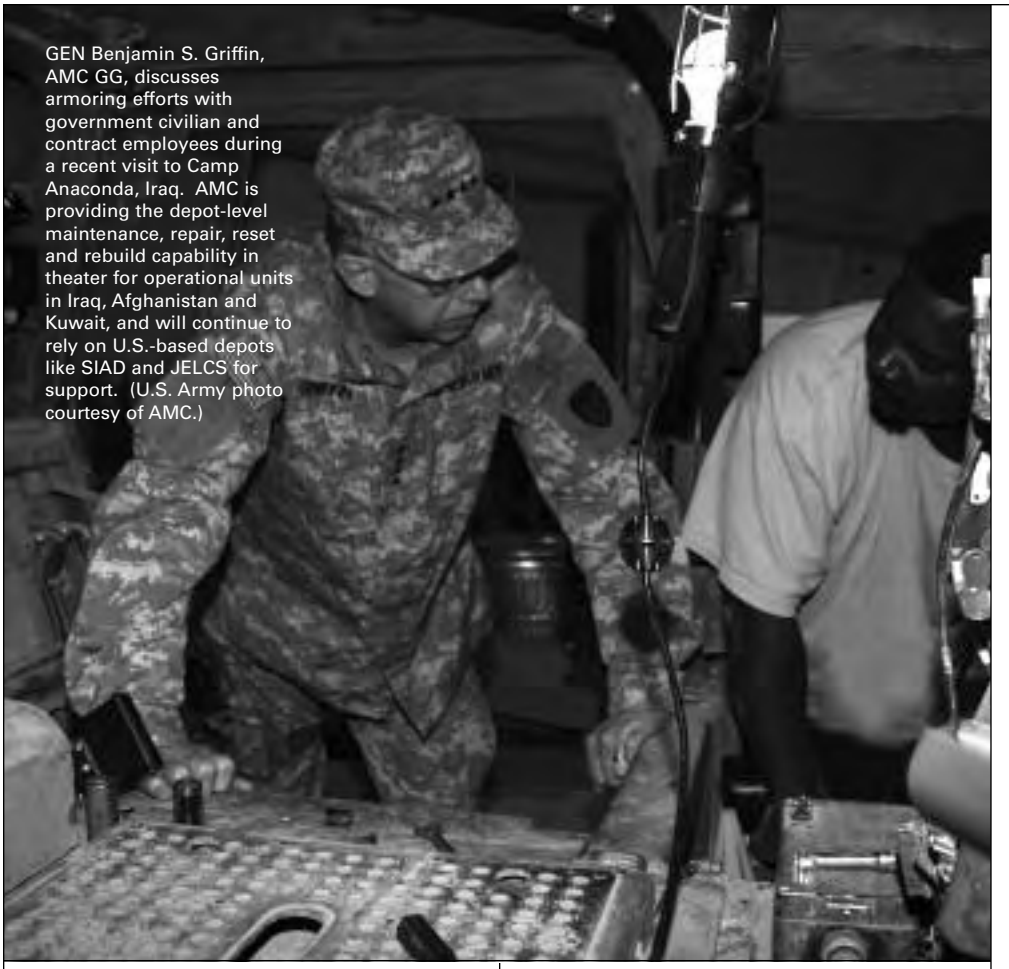
Retail Supply

Retail supply, also known as the reverse pipeline initiative or reverse logistics, is a relatively new function at Sierra. Excess materials from theater and humanitarian operations are sent to Sierra to be broken down and inspected to determine the supply class, condition code and remaining shelf life. Once the material status has been established, it is issued into the Standard Army Retail Supply System, available for Army units to use. Retail supply can potentially save the Army millions of dollars — savings that are passed along to military customers by making excess material available for depot repair, spare parts replacement and parts fulfillment that would otherwise be disposed.

Expeditionary Logistics

Expeditionary logistics includes those functions that are associated with

USAF SSGT Matthew McGovern (right), 570th CRG, Travis AFB, CA, checks the MILES with USAF SSGT Mark N. Anderson prior to the start of Exercise Lightning Fury. Soldiers and Airmen performed a variety of threat reaction simulations during the FTX. (U.S. Army photo by Vision Information Specialist Lynn Goddard.)



GEN Benjamin S. Griffin, AMC GG, discusses armoring efforts with government civilian and contract employees during a recent visit to Camp Anaconda, Iraq. AMC is providing the depot-level maintenance, repair, reset and rebuild capability in theater for operational units in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, and will continue to rely on U.S.-based depots like SIAD and JELCS for support. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of AMC.)

depot operations and that aid workforce members in their ability to rapidly deploy support directly to the area of operations. This support often includes procurement, maintenance, repair, reset, rebuild, assembly, configuration management, care of supply in storage and containerization. With the help of LSS, SIAD is continuously implementing and improving depot processes while reducing the work-in-process time.

Army Materiel Command (AMC) Commanding General (CG) GEN Benjamin S. Griffin offered a similar perspective in a recent interview with *Army AL&T* Magazine (see the January-March 2006 edition). "It gets into what we call 'logistical force generation.' When you want to reset the force and sustain the force over time, it becomes a combination of organic direct support and general support — what we have in the depots, what we're doing with contractors and what we're doing with original equipment manufacturers. It involves looking at what is the best combination thereof, trying to remove as much bureaucracy as we can, looking at the layering that we have and reducing, where we can, any kind of obstacles to make the entire acquisition and maintenance process faster, more efficient and more economical. By more efficient, I mean with respect to how quickly we can turn a piece of equipment around and fix it, ensuring that we're fixing it to the right standard and doing this as cost-effectively as we can. This is not unique to the Army. Our sister services are moving along the same path and we are learning from them."

Long-Term Storage

Major emphasis is being placed on long-term storage given that Sierra has massive growth potential for covered warehouse space and open storage space with 37,937 developable acres. The Army has avoided large storage fees by storing materials at Sierra. To see the real-time cost-avoidance calculator, go to **www.sierra.army.mil/savings.html**. There are 799 igloos with a temperature between 50 degrees and 70 degrees available for Joint agency storage needs. Sierra's high desert climate makes it a perfect location for long-term storage. The average temperature is 67 degrees with low humidity between 15 and 35 percent. The sun shines approximately 300 days per year and averages an annual precipitation of only five inches. Lassen County has enforced restrictive zoning around Sierra that eliminates private sector encroachment. By combining long-term storage with interagency training development, Sierra will become DOD's JELC of choice.

Sierra maintains itself as a Joint rapid deployment installation by continuing to perform retail supply, transportation management, reset, Joint training and long-term storage activities. The expansion of long-term storage, with the support of interagency missions like the Lightning Fury training exercise, will help transform SIAD and develop the necessary Joint capabilities to fulfill DOD's increasing force projection requirements.

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